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AP English

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Why Would You Do That?

Simply put, I cannot fathom why anyone smokes. I fail to understand why someone would choose such a long painful death. If you're going to commit suicide, why not do it fast? Considering the options, logically most people would choose the gun or even the knife. But, what a drawn out affair it becomes when someone chooses tobacco.

From the start of a smoker’s journey, they are oblivious to the damage they are inflicting with every puff and instead are surrounded by their own blissful clouds. The primary downfall comes in their appearance. Smokers look ridiculous. Call me judgmental, but upon meeting a smoker, I have less respect for them than I would for a nonsmoker. Not only do smokers look stupid, they smell dreadful. Everything about a smoker’s presence screams trashy. The longer a smoker smokes, the higher a toll it takes on their body. Smoking accelerates aging to the highest degree. Where a nonsmoker may have white teeth and smooth skin, a smoker has bright yellow teeth and deeply wrinkled, cratered skin. Smoking can add up to 10 years to the appearance of a smoker’s skin. How could smoking possibly boost a person’s confidence by improving their image? Why do some people believe that by destroying their body inside and out they will look better? I will forever question a smoker’s motives.

Perhaps when those who choose to smoke start, they do so without the intention of continuing for years. What smokers fail to realize is the power of the nicotine in the toxin they put in their mouth every day. Of course nicotine has its benefits, aside from keeping a person addicted to a cancer causing death drug. Nicotine, along with other chemicals in cigarettes, will surely improve the mood of the smoker and suppress anger. It can even improve concentration and short-term memory. Cigarettes even have the power to promote an all over sense of well being. Thank goodness for cigarettes because if not for them some people would have the nerve to suggest exercising could bring the same benefits. Of course, we must steer clear of the hard work and instead opt only for the quick fix regardless of the consequences we may face along the way.

With their happy ignorance keeping concerns for health problems at bay, smokers can enjoy their calmed moods and be thankful they have such peace are told they have cancer. Or perhaps they can breathe a sigh of relief when the diagnosis is emphysema. Surely, they will have support from other smokers. If a smoker were to be put in a room with nine other smokers, half of them will die from a smoking related illness. Half of those deaths will occur in middle age. These smokers will have plenty to talk about while awaiting their inevitable fate. Jim and Bob can talk about how much they look forward to suffering strokes together, while Sue and Jane can look ahead to their future heart attacks. Sally and Ted can anticipate their trips to chemotherapy together, and Sarah can dream of sleepless nights with emphysema. Whatever the case may be, they can all be sure to hold on tight to their dear friend tobacco.

Perhaps there is an explanation for my bitter distaste for smoking. Many would say it is unfair to criticize something you have never tried, but in my case, I have no interest in ever inhaling smoke into my lungs. It is easy to see people smoke every day, perhaps a stranger, someone you care about, or even you. But once you are personally affected by the disastrous affects of smoking, it is hard to watch from the sidelines as people destroy their lives, and the lives of everyone close to them. As I stand here today, delivering this speech, I recall a commercial I saw while writing this speech for the American Cancer Society. It features people of all ages and races sitting around a table being served their birthday cakes filled with candles. The American Cancer Society claims to be the official sponsor of birthdays. Maybe if it weren’t for cigarettes, my mom would have celebrated her 51st birthday last week.